



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
July 29 – August 2, 2013

Author sheds light on residential schools

Nippissing.com

July 29, 2013

Steve Pitt



Bob Wells, author of Wawahte

NIPISSING – About two and a half years ago, retired Ontario conservation officer Bob Wells woke up and said “I have to do it.”

“Do what?” his wife Inge asked.

“I have to write a book,” Wells answered. “I made a promise.”

Wells was referring to a pledge he made to an Ojibwa elder more than six decades ago as a young white boy growing up in the Ontario’s far northland. Wells’ family owned a fishing lodge on a remote body of water about 100 kilometres north-west of Lake Superior. There were no roads in the area at that time. Other than the occasional American tourist stepping off the CNR train in search of good fishing, the Wells family had only nature and First Nations people for neighbours.

“There wasn’t even radio in the area back in those days,” Wells says, “so people learned to tell stories to keep each other amused and up to date about what was going on.”

One of the story tellers Bob particularly liked to visit was Moochum-Joe, an Ojibwa elder who was so old he could barely walk beyond the confines of his cabin. “I

would bring him water from the lake, firewood for his stove and even a few cigarettes I stole from my parents," Wells says. "In return, he would sit for hours and tell me stories about nature and hunting. He called me Nabis, which meant 'boy' and I called him Moochum which is Ojibwa for Grandfather."

One day Moochum-Joe said to the young Wells "Your spirit is different from the other white kids I know. You have been given the spirit to someday draw words on paper to tell your kind how badly Indian people are treated. They take our kids away – they do not allow us to live as the people we are. They treat us as children, telling us what and when to do things. They even sell us a child's ticket to ride the train. You should not think of such things now because your journey is still young. When you become older – you will know the words – *draw them true*."

Surrounded by fishers and hunters, it is not surprising Bob Wells grew up to be a conservation officer for the province of Ontario. Also given his upbringing, it is not surprising that many of his friends were First Nations people from around the province.

"When I was stationed in West Nipissing near North Bay, I became great friends with a Cree woman named Ester who was born and raised at the Mammamattawa Village which is also known as English River Village Indian Reserve. When she was six, someone from the government took her and other village children away to live at the Pelican Lake Indian Residential School near Sioux Lookout, Ontario." Wells said. "Ester told me that to survive the loneliness she and her classmates would often go outside at night to watch the northern lights which are called Wawahte in Cree. They would pretend that the lights were the spirits of their far away loved ones dancing in the skies to cheer them up."

Twenty years after he retired as a conservation officer, Wells suddenly felt ready to fulfill his promise to Moochum-Joe to "draw words on paper" of the story of how First Nations people have been treated in Canada. He contacted Ester and two other close First Nations friends and asked to write their stories. The result is not quite what people might expect.

"The book is not written in anger because it would be too painful to read," Wells says. "By writing Wawahte, I hope to create a dialogue for people to realize the continuing impact of forced-integration residential schools."

Although the Canadian Residential School program began in 1876 with the adoption of the Indian Act by the federal government, very few non-First Nations Canadians knew much about their existence until revelations of physical and sexual abuse began leaking to the press in the 1960s. By the time the last federally operated Residential School closed in 1996, more than 150,000 First Nations children had passed through the system.

The release of Wells' book coincides with even more disturbing revelations about Canadian residential schools. Former residents of St. Anne's Residential School in Fort Albany, Ontario are suing the federal government for damages alleging that many of them had been tortured by the missionaries who ran the school, on a home made electric chair. It was also recently revealed that First Nations children and adults were deliberately used as human lab rats for Canadian federal government nutrition experiments from 1942 to 1956. As a result of those experiments, the health of thousands of First Nations children was permanently impaired and many died from malnutrition- related illnesses.

Wells stresses that his book is not about blaming today's non-Native community for what has happened long ago. "We cannot change the past but we can shape the future," Wells says. "Many First Nations Canadians continue to live in appalling Third World conditions. These stories from the past provide a framework for understanding what exists now."

Chief Dr. Robert Joseph, Executive Director of the Indian Residential School Survivor Society, British Columbia, says Wells' book is "A story that truly belongs in the public domain and in all Canadian high schools."

Wawahte is available in both paperback and as an audiobook. It can be ordered through your local independent bookstore or online.

First nations wants full disclosure

[Windsor Star](#)

July 26, 2013

Dalson Chen



Michelle Nahdee helps Kiara Mitchell, 9, right, light a candle at the Honour the Apology Vigil at Windsor's riverfront under the Ambassador Bridge on Thursday. Photograph by: Dax Melmer, The Windsor Star, The Windsor Star

If the Canadian government is truly sorry for the horrific Indian residential school system, it should reveal everything about that dark era, say local First Nations supporters.

On Thursday, a handful of people lit candles on Windsor's riverfront as part of a countrywide rally to urge full disclosure of all documents concerning the schools that for decades forcibly assimilated the children of Canada's aboriginal population. Although Prime Minister

Stephen Harper in 2008 formally apologized on behalf of the nation for the Indian residential school system, critics say the government is dishonouring the apology by holding back important historical information from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. "There's been no meaningful action behind the apology," said Lorena Shepley, a community organizer and ally of the CanAm Indian Friendship Centre of Windsor. "It's just not enough."

Earlier this month, Canada's First Nations community was shocked by revelations that the residential school system used native students as unwitting test subjects for nutritional experiments - such as withholding rations and vitamins. The revelations came from recently published historical research - not from any government investigation. "(The documents) still haven't all been turned over. They're really dragging their feet," Shepley said. "Part of it is they need to employ more people to do this job. They're not making it a priority."

"I think (the new research) is the tip of the iceberg..... They purposely kept children starved to do studies on them."

The residential school system was legislated in the late 19th century. The last school of the system closed in 1996.

The system's most infamous period was the early 20th century, when there were as many as 80 schools of their kind across Canada.

It's been estimated that the mortality rate of the schools during that time was higher than 50 per cent, largely due to the spread of tuberculosis.

Earlier this year, the commission said at least 3,000 children died in the school system.

"Many children never returned home to their families again," Shepley said Thursday. "This is a staggering fact. If this happened in any other culture, I think ... it would be better addressed."

Shepley said Canada's aboriginal people are still feeling the impact of the residential schools, and will continue to for generations. "There are people living amongst us right now who were directly affected by the residential schools. A lot of them didn't (learn) how to be parents."

Post-traumatic stress disorder, addiction issues, and psychological problems due to physical and sexual abuse - that's the legacy of the Indian residential school system on Canada's First Nations, Shepley said.

"Our community suffers ... We have an awful lot of problems."

Critics press Ottawa to recognize wrongs against First Nations as genocide

[The Globe and Mail](#)

Jul. 30 2013, 6:00 AM EDT

Gloria Galloway



First Nations leaders and human rights experts will press the federal government to recognize that Canada's historical treatment of native people, including nutrition experiments conducted on children at aboriginal residential schools, constituted a genocide.

Phil Fontaine, a former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Bernie Farber, a social activist who is the former executive director of the Canadian Jewish Congress, and Michael Dan, a former neurosurgeon turned philanthropist, have been talking with native leaders about the need for Canada to admit that the word applies to the cumulative actions taken by the government against First Nations.

As early as this fall, they could ask the United Nations to apply its definition of genocide to Canada's historical record. This push comes five years after Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized on behalf of the Canadian government for the treatment of children at aboriginal residential schools.

Mr. Fontaine said he has been trying to elevate the issue so that more Canadians become aware of the history of the First Nations. He said he hopes that the government does not force native leaders to pursue the matter in the courts or at the UN.

When the issue of the residential schools was first made public, "we made the point then that it was important that this chapter in our Canadian history that is unwritten be told to Canadians," said Mr. Fontaine, so that "Canadians would then be able to engage in a conversation with us about this."

Jason MacDonald, a spokesman for Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt, said the government recognizes that there have been dark chapters in the Crown's relationship with First Nations.

"That is why our government apologized for the Indian residential schools policy," said Mr. MacDonald in an e-mail, "and that is why we continue to focus on the work of reconciliation, on improving living conditions for First Nations, and on creating economic opportunities for First Nation communities."

But Fred Kelly, a survivor of a residential school where hungry children were deprived of food so scientists could test the effects of nutritional supplements, said the apology did not close the door on the file. Mr. Kelly said he will be part of the push to have Canada's actions declared a genocide. "Whether people recognize it is genocide officially or unofficially," said Mr. Kelly, "I know that it is."

The UN defines genocide as the intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group through any of a number of means including killing its members, causing them serious mental or physical harm, subjecting them to unsustainable living conditions, preventing births of their children, and forcibly transferring their children to another group.

In 2000, four years after the last residential school closed, the government of Canada adopted a definition of genocide that excluded the line about the forcible transfer of children. Courts have rejected native claims of genocide against Ottawa and the churches because Canada had no law banning genocide while the schools were operating.

Kathleen Mahoney, a Canadian law professor who was counsel for Bosnia-Herzegovina in its genocide action against Serbia, said the best strategy would be to build a case using the documents buried in federal archives that the government is obligated to turn over to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was established to uncover and tell the truth about what happened at the schools.

The government has provided more than 3.5 million of the documents. And on Aug. 6, teams from the TRC will be allowed into the government archives to gather more of them, especially those relating to the health of former students. But there is much more material outstanding and, with just 11 months left in the TRC's mandate, it is uncertain if the work can be completed in time.

With a report from Bill Curry

Government and courts deciding what to do with documents that could support abuse claims

[The Canadian Press](#)

July 30, 2013

OTTAWA – Advocates for victims of residential school abuse say their voices are not being heard in a court case that's to decide what to do with documents from an investigation of the alleged abuse.

The federal government has asked the courts for help in deciding what to do with the documents, which stem from a police investigation into abuse at a residential school in northern Ontario.

The government wants a legal opinion on whether the documents can be released to Ontario Superior Court, which is overseeing implementation of a settlement of a class-action lawsuit against Ottawa.

But the victims need to be represented in Ontario court, and the federal government should ensure they have legal counsel present, says New Democrat MP Charlie Angus.

"For this legal opinion to be valid, the survivors have to be there," Angus told a news conference Monday.

"It cannot just be the federal government going to a closed hearing to give their side of the story."

Hundreds of aboriginal children from remote James Bay communities were sent to St. Anne's residential school in Fort Albany from 1904 to 1976. The documents in question were collected by Ontario Provincial Police when they conducted a five-year investigation of abuse at St. Anne's in the 1990s.

Advocates for the victims argue the material could corroborate their abuse claims under the lawsuit settlement process.

The police investigation turned up evidence of traumatic abuse at St. Anne's, including sexual abuse, children being made to eat their own vomit and the use of an home-made electric chair.

Five of seven men and women who were charged as a result were convicted for offences ranging from administering a noxious substance to assault causing bodily harm.

As time goes on — many abuse victims are at or nearing retirement age — the process for dealing with the abuse has become more draining, said Edmund Metatawabin, 65, who has testified to twice being put in the electric chair as a seven-year-old in the mid-1950s.

But advocates for the victims will carry on, demanding that their voices are heard, he told the news conference.

"We still continue, unfortunately, to pursue this process, no matter how difficult it's becoming on certain of us," said Metatawabin.

"We must speak for the survivors."

It was one of 140 church-run residential schools set up in Canada to "civilize" First Nations.

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Aboriginals need more control, Phoenix Sinclair inquiry told

[Global News](#)

July 30, 2013

Steve Lambert



Phoenix Sinclair was murdered by her mother, Samantha Kematch, and her mother's boyfriend, Karl McKay, in 2005. Handout

WINNIPEG – Aboriginals need more control over child welfare, education and other social programs because government efforts have largely failed them, a Manitoba inquiry was told Monday.

Aboriginal parents have good reason not to trust social workers who seize their children, lawyer Catherine Dunn said, given the impact of the residential school system which, for decades, separated children from their families.

"It comes back down to that kitchen door opening and somebody coming in and taking your children, and you saying to the mother 'get past that ... we're here to help you.'

"It is asking too much of aboriginal families in Manitoba who did trust the system, who gave their children away to the Indian residential school system and received them back as shadows of their former selves."

Dunn represents Ka Ni Kanichihk, a non-profit group that provides community programs to at-risk aboriginals. She was the last of more than a dozen lawyers to make final submissions to the inquiry into the 2005 death of Phoenix Sinclair.

The inquiry is examining how the child welfare system failed to protect Phoenix, who was abused and beaten to death at the age of five by her mother and mother's boyfriend. Phoenix had spent most of her life in foster care or with family friends

and was killed shortly after social workers decided she could remain with her mother.

In its later stages, the inquiry has also been examining broader social issues — why aboriginal children make up the vast majority of children in care and why rates of poverty and substance abuse are high.

“We know why that is so and it has got nothing to do with parenting,” Dunn said.

“It has got to do with Indian residential schools. It has got to do with multi-generational trauma that resulted in unhealthy coping behaviours.”

Dunn called on inquiry Commissioner Ted Hughes to recommend more social programs be delivered through aboriginal-run groups. She also asked for more funding and said parents whose children have been taken by social workers should have the right to a publicly-funded advocate.

Earlier Monday, another lawyer called for a separate school system for aboriginals in Winnipeg. Greg Tramley, who represents the advocacy group Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, said it would be much like Manitoba’s Francophone school system — subject to provincial standards, but designed to protect the culture of its students.

“The community would then obviously have an ability to make it culturally appropriate and provide for some of the flexibility that isn’t there today.”

The inquiry has heard from 126 witnesses since it began last September. Lawyers are being given an opportunity this week to reply to each other’s final submissions. Hughes’ report is expected by mid-December.

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First Nation group furious at Province's move to cut trees down for Enbridge pipeline path

[Vancouver Observer](#)

July 30, 2012

Jenny Uechi



September 2012 photo of Yinka Dene Alliance

Geraldine Thomas-Flurer, a spokesperson for the [Yinka Dene Alliance](#), vowed today to fight the BC government's moves toward granting Enbridge temporary land use permits to cut trees to gather data for the Northern Gateway pipeline, even before the pipeline has been approved.

[Thomas-Flurer of the Saik'uz First Nation](#) decried the absence of what she called "proper consultation" by the Province.

"There's no way that the Yinka Dene Alliance is going to allow this to happen...we've put up signage on our territories and we're going to be practicing our Aboriginal rights, which we've practiced for a millennium. We're going to stop the people who are on the land who think they can just go out and act on temporary permits."

"We don't want the Province to approve any permits or do anything to advance the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline," she added. "The Yinka Dene Alliance has said that we are going to be the wall that Enbridge has to go through, and we are adamant about that."

If the permits for the Nak'azdli First Nations territories are approved, they would allow Enbridge to undertake short-term occupation of the lands, construction of temporary access trails and removal of timber from the trails and occupation sites.

"The purpose of the program is to gather geotechnical data required to inform the design of the proposed pipeline," responded Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operation public officer Brennan Clarke in an email, relaying comments made on behalf of the ministry. He noted that Northern Gateway began efforts to

engage First Nations in January 2013, and that the Saik'uz First Nations' traditional territory is not among the 33 sites affected by the survey.

Thomas-Flurer said that First Nations in BC were hunting, gathering and fishing on the land during this season, and that it would not allow any activity that would compromise these activities as the tar sands development did to Albertan First Nations.

The Yinka Dene Alliance of First Nations issued a [cease and desist letter](#) to Enbridge in June against any surveying of the Nak'azdli First Nations' land, saying that it would be viewed as trespassing. She said the public will be made aware if Enbridge began surveying the land based on permits that were not approved by the chiefs.

"We don't own these lands. We have to take care of these lands for future generations. This is a responsibility we have as First Nations people and we take that very seriously. The world is watching. The United Nations is watching. People have to be mindful of that," Thomas-Flurer said.

The Saik'uz Nation, whose territory is near Vanderhoof, British Columbia, the Nak'azdli who are near Fort St. James, the [Nadleh Whut'en near Fort Fraser](#) and other First Nations affected by the pipeline have received up to hundred-page long referrals from Enbridge for "investigative field work activities" relating to Northern Gateway.

While the Province hasn't explicitly given permission to Enbridge, a recent letter implies that Enbridge could be allowed to proceed if the First Nations involved don't make their way through the documents and respond by a certain date.

"We're extremely disappointed that the Province has elected to refer the development applications for the project on a piecemeal basis that does not allow for any consideration of the real concerns in relation to the larger project," Thomas-Flurer said.

The ministry noted in the email:

"Regardless of whether First Nations respond or not, the decision maker must consider all available, relevant information in making a decision to issue the permit or not. If no response is provided by a First Nation the province must consider available information with respect to potential impacts on First Nations rights and title."

"Consultation does not imply veto power."

Letter to "proceed to a decision" about temporary land use permits

News of the threat of logging to make way for the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline reached the [Nak'azdli First Nation](#) last week via a letter from the government notifying them of an intent to "proceed to a decision" about controversial temporary land use permits given to Enbridge.

The letter, dated July 23, demanded a response by 3 p.m., July 26. It noted in the first paragraph that the Province did reject the Northern Gateway proposal. Then it went on to say that "given the uncertainty of the outcome of the federal review and decision making process, the Province is of the view that it is appropriate to limit the scope of consultation to the impacts of the Temporary use Permits."

But the Yinka Dene Alliance say consultation has been sorely inadequate. They say the BC government seems to treat the land use requests as being separate from Northern Gateway, when in fact the field work is part of the proposed pipeline.

"The province keeps treating this as if it's two separate issues, which is ridiculous," Brenda Belak of West Coast Environmental Law said.

"It's really obfuscation. There has been no decision on from the JRP yet. If Enbridge is submitting further information, everyone should be able to see and respond to it, otherwise the process is not fair. In fact, what they appear to be doing is proceeding with preparations for the pipeline before there has been an approval."

Belak and Thomas-Flurer both said that under section 35 of the Constitution, the Canadian government has a duty to respect Aboriginal rights of First Nations affected by permits such as these.

Although they have requested to meet with Premier Christy Clark before any permits are granted, no meeting has been scheduled to date and as of publication.

Dams society watching, waiting to make next step: City of Nanaimo currently in the midst of 30-day consultation period with Snuneymuxw First Nation

[Nanaimo Daily News](#)

July 29, 2013

Spencer Anderson



The Colliery Dams Preservation Society continues to raise funds and has hired lawyer Danelle Lambert to assist them with their efforts moving forward. Photograph by: Daily News

The Colliery Dams Preservation Society has approximately \$7,500 cash on hand and is waiting and watching before deciding what its next steps will be.

The City of Nanaimo is currently in the midst of a 30-day consultation period with Snuneymuxw First Nations to attempt to reach a consensus on how to move forward with the controversial Colliery dams issue. The middle and lower Colliery dams are over 100 years old each and are considered a fixture in the Harewood neighbourhood. Contained within the structures are two lakes that are loved by many residents.

However, the dams have also been flagged by the B.C. Dam Safety Section as a serious threat to the surrounding community. The city commissioned two studies to review options to address the safety risk of the dams following an angry public response in opposition to the original proposal to remove the structures. In May, council voted to remove the dams this year and build replacements in 2014, but that decision was also stalled once consultations with SFN began.

The CDPS has meanwhile been raising funds and planning its next move. The group has hired lawyer Danelle Lambert to assist them going forward.

Lambert said she and her clients are waiting to see what the outcome of the consultation process with SFN will be.

"The Dam Safety Branch indicated that the City of Nanaimo applied to replace the Dams in May 2013," she said in an email to the Daily News.

"It is my understanding that the Dam Safety Branch won't make a decision until after the 30-day consultation period has ended. As such, the earliest a decision would be made would be after August 8, 2013.

"If the city's application to replace the Dams is granted, my clients may wish to investigate the feasibility of launching an appeal to the Environmental Appeal Board.

"My clients would also likely investigate whether any other legal remedies might be available if or when the city decides to move forward with plans to replace the Dams."

When asked what other options might be open to the group, Lambert replied: "We're not done investigating that at this point."

Mayor John Ruttan said consultants are reviewing the material prepared for the city in an attempt to find cost savings in proposals for the dams.

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Generational feud gripping Manitoba Cree community with gunplay, beatings

[APTN National News](#)

July 30, 2013

Jorge Barrera



A generations-old feud is threatening to spiral out of control on a Manitoba First Nation following a month that has seen shootings and beatings in tit-for-tat strikes, community members say.

A band meeting is scheduled in Misipawistik Cree Nation, also known as Grand Rapids, for Aug. 7 to discuss the flaring violence. Community members say that the chief is mulling banning people from the reservation.

The violence has put people on edge.

"I think there is going to be more of it coming and coming," said one local resident, whose relative was beaten with a bat, but asked to remain anonymous over safety concerns. "I don't think it's going to stop."

Misipawistik Cree Nation sits near the point where the Saskatchewan River meets Lake Winnipeg, about 440 kilometres north of Winnipeg and 330 kilometres south of Thompson, Man. The Cree community's name means "Rushing Rapids" in Cree, but a hydro dam completed in 1968 silenced those rapids, forever.

The Cree community, which has an on-reserve population of about 700, has experienced periodic bursts of violence in recent years, most of it fueled by a volatile mix of long-held animosity between families and struggles over the cocaine and pills trade. Misipawistik is a transit point for drugs coming up from Winnipeg to Thompson, local residents say.

Misipawistik Cree Nation Chief Harold Turner announced the band meeting on his personal Facebook page Sunday.

"5 p.m., community concerns, gang activity on reserve," wrote Turner.

He could not be reached for comment.

Former Assembly of First Nations national chief Ovide Mercredi is also a band councillor there. He could not be reached for comment.

Alice Cook said the latest round of violence, which was sparked by a shooting earlier this month, followed a period of relative calm that began after a fight during a pow wow about five years ago led the community to come together and settle things down.

"Everything seemed to be resolved and everything was quiet and then it started up again," said Cook, 60. "People are afraid; many in our community live in fear. It goes from one extreme to another."

According to the Grand Rapids RCMP, the shooting that began the latest cycle happened on the evening of July 8 after a 22-year-old man was shot while driving an all-terrain vehicle. The RCMP said in a statement that a 20-year-old man named Alexander Joe Sanderson had been charged with two counts of attempted murder in relation to the incident.

Wayne Scott's son was riding on the ATV with the 22-year-old who was shot. Scott, who is a Pentecostal pastor in the community, said the 22-year-old was shot in the arm with buckshot from a sawed-off shotgun as he drove by a house party. Some of the pellets went through his son's hoodie.

"There was a party that the Sandersons were having and they waited for them to come back," said Scott.

Then, this past Saturday, Scott's 18 year-old son, who was about 100 yards away from home, was shot in the leg with a . 22 during a drive-by shooting.

"He was in a quite a bit of pain, but he was okay, he'll tough it out," said Scott.

Some of Scott's family members, however, immediately retaliated and attacked a member of the rival clan, beating him with a bat.

"My nephews, they went to chase them down and they caught them and they beat one almost half to death," he said.

Now, Scott said, one of the main drug dealers in the community is texting people, offering money to go shoot up his relative's houses in retaliation.

"The biggest problem we have are the drugs and the drug dealers. These are the drug dealers that came over here, that tried to shoot my son," he said.

And Scott feels the RCMP is doing nothing to stop the violence. After the first shooting earlier this month, he said one of the officers told him it was too dangerous to go directly after the shooter. Scott said the local RCMP is doing little to investigate his son's shooting.

"I had tried to talk to the police, to give them tips, the neighbourhood talks and let us know it was," he said. "But they said they couldn't do anything, that they didn't have enough evidence, that people have to testify. They don't want to do the footwork."

Scott said a senior officer suggested that the beating in retaliation to the second shooting had evened things up.

"He said something like, that should settle it...we shouldn't have to worry about it too much anymore," he said. "They are dragging their feet about the investigation. They don't want to do nothing. I shook my head walking away from the police yesterday."

RCMP Cpl. Richard Young denied that a police officer had suggested that to Scott.

"Absolutely there is an investigation that is ongoing," said Young, before referring further queries to the division's communications department.

"At this juncture, I can't confirm who or what, may or may not be the subject of an investigation. To do so may infringe on the privacy of individuals directly or indirectly and also, to do so, could jeopardize the integrity of any possible ongoing

investigation," said Sgt. Line Karpish, media relations officer for the RCMP's D Division.

For Cook, the only solution is for the community to take control of the situation.

"This feud, or whatever you want to call it, goes back a long way," she said. "People are trying to get even, trying to get back at each other. A lot of crap is going on."

This past Sunday, Cook woke up to see the windows in her brother's van smashed. She said she stood on the road with her face in her hands and suddenly felt she had to do something.

"And I started walking through the whole reserve and then with 12 or 15 people," said Cook. "We have to take our community back, to get on track. We have too much drugs in our community. It's destroying families...We have to do something positive and say to these people that enough is enough," she said. "These people that sell the drugs, that sell the pills, you look at their eyes and there is no life in those eyes, they don't have anything, that spirit is gone."

Many in the community believe the poison that runs through the reserve surfaced after a massive hydro development on the Saskatchewan River silenced the rapids and destroyed a way of life that had existed for centuries.

"Grand Rapids was not born with drugs and alcohol; we were not born with boredom and idleness. There are a lot of things that our families and our communities were not prepared for. We weren't prepared for that change," said one band member, who requested anonymity.

The area around the rapids had been a gathering place for the Crees since time immemorial. Year-round settlements formed around the fur trade in the 1700s.

Before the construction of the Grand Rapids dam by Manitoba Hydro in the 1960s, the Cree in the area lived off the land, hunting, trapping and fishing. There was no road linking them to the rest of the province and they lived in homes they built themselves.

In 2012, Manitoba Hydro signed a \$58 million compensation deal with the Mispawistik Cree Nation to allow for the renewal of the dam's provincial license. Most of the money, under the deal, will be paid out to the Cree over the next 50 years.

NDP leader vows to fight for natives

[Sault Star](#)

July 31, 2013
Elaine Della-Mattia

SAULT STE. MARIE - Federal NDP leader Tom Mulcair calls it his "listening tour."

The leader of the opposition is on a Northern Ontario sweep – including consultation with First Nation communities – to show his support for the issues that affect Aboriginals which he says is something that Stephen Harper's Conservative government is refusing to deal with.

"It's extremely important because we know that it's the type of issue that if you don't deal with once and for all thoroughly, and with dedication and sincerity, it's a huge debt we're going to leave to the next generations in Canada," Mulcair said in an interview with The Sault Star. "We need to take their issues seriously."

Mulcair said that the NDP will confront and deal with the First Nation issues head on in 2015 if he becomes the next Prime Minister of Canada.

He says First Nations is a federal responsibility and he believes it's the role of the federal government to work with the provinces and deal with First Nation's issues.

The leader, who took the party's reins from the popular Jack Layton, who lost his battle to cancer two years ago, believes that there are many areas where the federal government can help First Nations to ensure they have the same opportunity and basic needs as the rest of Canada.

Mulcair said in order to do that "you need to develop a relationship nation to nation and that includes respect and recognition," he said. "Start with that and the rest will flow."

Other items that need to "flow" include federal investments into education and First Nation communities, he said.

First Nation students need the same investment in education as other Canadians, he said. First Nations children get 50% less funding per capita than other students across Canada.

"If I was one of those parents I wouldn't accept that," he said.

In addition, despite being a country with the best fresh, renewable water resource, many First Nation communities do not have access to that resource, he said.

Other First Nation communities have sub-standard housing, something that could be easily addressed with developing capacities and future communities.

"There's another one that people don't talk about much but it's the disposal of residual matter," he said. "Proper waste systems need to be put in place to help the developing communities."

Mulcair's Northern Ontario tour has taken him to several other communities in the North and he sees that the economy has been hit hard by some Conservative government decisions that have not helped the resource-driven and cyclical economy of the North.

He said the federal government has decreased spending on infrastructure, breaking promises that said infrastructure spending would be on the rise, Mulcair said.

Mulcair said the "increase" in infrastructure investment, promised by Minister of Finance Jim Flaherty, resulted in \$4.5 billion less in federal infrastructure spending.

"Municipalities are responsible for 60% of the infrastructure in Canada and they have only 8% of the fiscal pie. The government is asking them to assume huge costs for roads, sewers and water."

Mulcair said he's in favour of a national transit strategy that results in an overall transportation plan that will guide Canada's infrastructure spending.

Continuing problems with rail and air safety and the country's waterway, which is relied on to transport raw products and finished goods, shows that the federal government needs to invest in infrastructure, he said.

Mulcair said it is important that the Canadian dollar not be artificially inflated and that it reflects its true value to help the manufacturing industry.

He said the Canadian dollar has to reflect its real value.

"If you apply sustainable development principles, then the market will take care of that," he said.

Mulcair continues his Northern Ontario tour this week with stops in Elliot Lake and Manitoulin Island. He will be in Sudbury on Wednesday to host a roundtable on rail infrastructure and safety with MPs Glenn Thibeault and Claude Gravelle. MP for Trinity-Spadina, Olivia Chow, will be accompanying Mulcair.

Throughout his tour of Northern Ontario, Mulcair is meeting with union leaders, Aboriginal Elders and chiefs, along with mayors and municipal representatives.

'Gap in education funding perpetuates gap in learning':
Madahbee

July 31, 2013

UOI OFFICES (NIPISSING FN), July 31, 2013 /CNW/ - Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee says that the federal government is not putting money where their mouth is when it comes to First Nations education.

In June, Indian Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt was quoted as saying that "...the greatest legacy that we can leave to First Nations in Canada is an education system that will give those young native people the chance to get the education they need. We need them to be full participants in our economy."

Based on the 2010 provincial funding allocations, the school in Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek (Rocky Bay First Nation) received \$4781.00 less per student than a provincially-funded school in the Upsala School Authority. Both schools are located in the same geographic area and had the same amount of students.

The Anishinabek First Nations have been negotiating a self-government agreement with Canada for the last 18 years to establish the Anishinabek Education System. The Anishinabek Education System is holistically-rooted in community involvement, Anishinaabe identity, and meaningful First Nations curriculum. This system will provide educational success for Anishinabek First Nations students.

Canada recently tabled its fiscal funding offer to the Anishinabek Nation. This offer was presented in response to the proposal submitted by the Anishinabek Nation to close the education funding gap and to ensure sufficient funding to run the Anishinabek Education System.

"Canada's fiscal offer does not address the long standing gap in band operated education funding which currently stands at about \$11M ," says Grand Chief Madahbee. "Our schools are already struggling with the lack of financial resources. We're looking for comparable funding to the provincial school system. No matter where a school is situated, the school should receive the same education funding."

"Canada's fiscal offer was a slap in the face," says Madahbee. "The gap in education funding will perpetuate the gap in learning. The government's own statistics consistently show the First Nations students do not advance in school as far as other Canadian children. Lack of funding is a major reason why."

According to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to which Canada is signatory, the Anishinabek, as indigenous peoples, have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions. Anishinabek children have a right to education without discrimination and a right to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

The Anishinabek Nation established the Union of Ontario Indians as its secretariat in 1949. The UOI is a political advocate for 39 member communities across Ontario, representing approximately 55,000 people. The Union of Ontario Indians is the oldest political organization in Ontario and can trace its roots back to the Confederacy of Three Fires, which existed long before European contact.

SOURCE Anishinabek Nation

Truth and reconciliation conference sheds light on residential schools

[Wetaskiwin Times](#)

Wednesday, July 31, 2013 12:33:40 MDT PM

Michael Chan



Percy Thompson with the support of his daughter, Jennifer, shared the story of how his disfigured hand came to be.

It has been a long time coming, but the healing process for the First Nations people of Canada and the government of the country has begun.

On past decades and decades of silence, of being controlled and being abused, First Nations people can finally break their silence of the injustice they have suffered.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was created to unearth the pain and suffering that the Aboriginal community had gone through from the result of the residential schools that the government started in the 1870s. This past Thursday and Friday, the commission came to the Hobbema community to hear the stories of those who endured the torture of these residential schools.

"Many of us were damaged in many different ways," said Chief Wilton Littlechild, who is also a commissioner to Truth and Reconciliation. "Either because of the sexual abuse, the mental abuse or physical abuse. In many ways you become damaged and inevitably you pass that on to your family and to your children.

"So what can we do about that as a nation and in a good way that we can say 'this shouldn't have happened and it shouldn't happen again' but in order for it to not happen again what can we do together to build a better country, to build a better Canada?"

The residential schools were government funded but ran by churches, housing Aboriginal children, taken from their parents at a very young age.

It's a truth about Canada that has always been kept under the rug until recent years. It has been estimated that more than 150,000 First Nation, Metis and Inuit children were taken from their homes and usually against their parents will. The children at these schools were forbidden to speak their language, practice their religion or do anything that was related to their heritage.

For those who disobeyed, it often resulted in brutal physical, mental and sexual abuse from those who ran the residential schools.

Raymond Baptiste, born in Wetaskiwin 1951, was taken away from his family at a very young age and was forced down the path of corruption and narcotics.

"These school's took us away from our mothers and fathers," said Baptiste. "They failed to provide us with the parental guidance that a young child needs and they force feed us their religion."

Another victim of this century-long crime was Percy Thompson, who is reminded everyday of what he went through as youth from his disfigured hand. His hand is in such condition because he had to go to the bathroom.

Thompson still remembers the day vividly, he had just finished lunch and need to go to the bathroom. He told the nun who was teaching the class at the time that he needed to go. To which she responded.

"Keep quiet you silly boy."

He waited and asked again and the nun responded the same. Finally Thompson, being a child at the time could not hold it in anymore and unfortunately relived himself in his pants. He retells that the nun screamed.

"You Filthy boy!"

Thompson was told to go up to the front of the classroom where the nun hit his left hand with a stick. The stick broke after the second strike, but the nun then grabbed a meter stick and continued to hit Thompson. This went on for minutes until the nun was tired and when Thompson went back to his desk, his hand began to double in size and he would he later find out that a tendon was broken from the beating he had received.

Due to that incident, Thompson can't use his left hand anymore.

"Every time I wash my face," said Thompson. "I remember."

Littlechild explained that it was the government's way to "civilize" and "Christianize" the people and it is the root cause for the social problems that still plague the Aboriginal community today.

However, the Government of Canada has taken small steps to rebuilding their relationship with the Aboriginal community, starting with a public apology from Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2008, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is just another step towards building a stronger relationship.

"I was so encouraged a couple of months ago when Wetaskiwin had an event," said Littlechild. "At the function I spent the day discussing building bridges through reconciliation in Wetaskiwin and the citizens really came together under their leaders, especially by the leadership of the mayor, to teach people what really happened in these schools.

"This is about healing, us as individual survivors. Then help our family heal and through that, our community.

"I'm so happy of the turnout here and the vast majority of non-aboriginals who are here to learn about the history and listen to the stories from former students. It's very encourage."

Metis eye opportunities from massive land claim settlement

[CBC News](#)

Jul 31, 2013 11:26 AM CT



The Manitoba Metis Federation has put together a powerful investment team, including a former Prime Minister, to find opportunities in the wake of a landmark land claims ruling.

MMF president David Chartrand was all smiles in Winnipeg on Wednesday as he unveiled his "all-star team," which will create a legacy fund to support the Metis community once a settlement is secured with the Crown.

That claim that could total in the billions of dollars, Chartrand said.

The MMF has created the Land Claims Strategic Investment Committee to help find business and development opportunities, and invest the money properly to "support the aspirations of the Métis people for generations to come."

The committee includes former PM Paul Martin, Hartley Richardson (CEO of James Richardson & Sons), Sanford Riley (CEO of Richardson Financial Group and chair of the University of Winnipeg Foundation), Harvey Sector (arbitrator and mediator and chancellor of the University of Manitoba), and Eric Newell (retired Alberta business exec).

Funding education for Metis people will be a priority, said Chartrand.

"We shouldn't be asking 'are they going to university?' We should be asking, 'which university will they be going to?'" he said.

"I am delighted that the MMF has placed the focus of this legacy initiative on building the health, education, and economic opportunities for the future generations of the Metis people," Martin said.

The land claims case was initiated by the MMF in 1981 and in March 2013, Canada's top court ruled in its favour.

The court found the federal government failed to follow through on a land deal negotiated with Louis Riel and the Metis people to end the Red River resistance in 1870, which led to the creation of the province of Manitoba.

The Metis had [argued to the Supreme Court that Ottawa reneged on its promises](#) under the Manitoba Act, which promised to set aside 5,565 square kilometres of land for 7,000 children of the Red River Métis. That land includes what is now the city of Winnipeg.

The court ruling did not order any particular remedies but opens the door to land claim negotiations or talks toward other forms of compensation from the federal government.

"Riel put together a committee when he negotiated Manitoba into Confederation. Now, I'm putting together my committee," Chartrand said.

"The recent Supreme Court decision made it clear that with respect to the Manitoba Act of 1870, Canada's government of the day did not act in good faith with respect to the Metis people," Richardson said.

"This was to the detriment of the Metis but now is the time to put the past behind us as we focus on future investment opportunities for young Metis people."

First Nation knowledge aids in quest for anti-cancer compounds

[Lab Product News](#)

August 1, 2013

Lethbridge, AB - In the native prairie grasses of southern Alberta, University of Lethbridge biological sciences researcher Dr. Roy Golsteyn is looking for new cancer treatments – and by inviting help from traditional First Nations knowledge practitioners, he is hoping his quest is significantly aided.

The project is the first search for anti-cancer agents based on First Nations traditional knowledge within Alberta.

In a chance meeting with Piikani Nation elder Conrad Littleleaf at the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump World Heritage Site, Golsteyn came to an important

realization; combining his quest for a new anti-cancer compound with Littleleaf's traditional First Nations knowledge could be key in a critical discovery.

"I did not immediately present myself as a cancer research scientist, however, I realized that we know little about how flora and fauna of Alberta might be used to treat cancer," says Golsteyn. "I soon invited Mr. Littleleaf to my Cancer Cell Laboratory at the University of Lethbridge to discuss the possibility of exchanging knowledge.

"We are still inviting First Nations members to work with us. Importantly, we are learning how to share knowledge, so we can find new anti-cancer drugs while respecting the origins and uses of traditional knowledge."

From this collaboration, and with support through the University of Lethbridge Research Fund, the Prairie to Pharmacy project was born.

"The geographical placement of the university and the people of our region make us a natural centre for this project. In addition to Mr. Littleleaf's help, we've enlisted Dr. John Bain (biological sciences), a botanist, who is the director of the University of Lethbridge Herbarium," says Golsteyn. "We also met with Leroy Little Bear (University of Lethbridge Professor Emeritus) who has been providing guidance."

Some of the most effective anti-cancer compounds are derived from natural products. For example, Taxol (an anti-cancer, chemotherapy drug) was discovered in extracts prepared from the bark of the pacific yew, a shrub that grows in the interior of British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest.

Another example, indigo dye (the colouring agent of blue jeans) is a natural compound with anti-cancer activity. The Chinese had recognized indigo for its anti-tumour activity for centuries, and further research on indigo led to the discovery of the anti-leukemia drug, meisoindigo.

Golsteyn says there are compelling reasons to search Alberta's prairies for a cancer breakthrough.

"For at least 6,000 years, First Nations people have sustained themselves with the materials available to them on the Prairies. They have acquired a profound knowledge of their environment," says Golsteyn. "There has been little Western scientific research on the anti-cancer potential of plants from the Prairies, especially of those in southern Alberta. We need to know if anti-cancer substances are present in the Prairies. First Nations people certainly hold a knowledge that could help in this quest."

Littleleaf, Bain and Golsteyn will collect plant materials (roots, stems and leaves) at various sites in southern Alberta. The plants will then be taken back to the lab at the U of L to be processed and tested on cancer cells.

The Prairie to Pharmacy project is also supported by Dr. Laurent Meijer from the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Roscoff, France – a renowned researcher with over 250 publications on cancer cell division and anti-cancer drugs. He discovered the natural anti-cancer drug, Roscovitine (cyc202/Seliciclib), which is in phase II clinical trials.

Meijer has led expeditions for natural products in continental Europe and Polynesia. He is the co-founder of the biotechnology company, ManRos Therapeutics, which operates the Sea to Pharmacy project, upon which Golsteyn has based the Prairie to Pharmacy idea.

Federal parties seek to connect with key First Nations voters

Canada.com

August 1, 2013

Michael Woods



Prime Minister Stephen Harper greets members of the Canadian Rangers dedicated to Operation Nanook. Harper's now-annual arctic trip usually involves meeting with indigenous leaders. Photo: Corp. Andrew L Davis

OTTAWA — The next federal election is two years away, but political parties are already jockeying for position with an increasingly important group of voters: Canada's indigenous population.

They're motivated by the increasing realization that indigenous voters have significant potential to be decisive in swing ridings, and by unprecedented political engagement among the young, growing aboriginal population in the form of the grassroots indigenous Idle No More movement.

There's also an increasing sense that First Nations are inextricably linked with Canada's economic fortunes, with many resource development projects planned for areas near aboriginal territory.

NDP leader Tom Mulcair's Canada-wide "listening tour" passed through northern Ontario this week, during which he met with First Nations leaders. On the weekend, Mulcair will meet with AFN National Chief Shawn Atleo in his home community in B.C.

Liberal leader Justin Trudeau attended the Assembly of First Nations' annual meeting in Whitehorse last month. He didn't give a speech, but mingled with First Nations leaders and listened in on meetings.

"This is the first time in a long time ... that I've seen predominant representatives from political parties going out to where the First Nations people are gathering," AFN Ontario Regional Chief Stan Beardy said.

The Conservatives, meanwhile, recently introduced legislation — focused on financial accountability and matrimonial property rights — that they say many First Nations people have been demanding. They are also developing new First Nations education legislation.

Aboriginals have historically voted in lower numbers than the rest of the Canadian population. Voter turnout on reserves was 45 per cent in the 2011 general election, compared to 61 per cent among the general population, [according to an Elections Canada study](#).

It's hard to get exact statistics for off-reserve First Nations, Inuit and Metis voters, but a separate Elections Canada report showed they likely have similar voting patterns.

Aboriginals are also Canada's fastest-growing population, so their percentage of the electorate is also increasing. Aboriginal peoples also form an increasingly important part of the workforce, particularly in Western Canada.

"Parties are looking at the demographic trends. They can't afford to ignore aboriginal peoples anymore," said Queen's University policy studies Prof. Kathy Brock, an expert on aboriginal issues.

Both opposition parties are gunning for votes in northern Ontario, northern Quebec and the west. The Liberals, whose former leaders Paul Martin and Bob Rae already enjoy high credibility on First Nations issues, believe they can appeal generally to the aboriginal population and see an opportunity to start rebuilding the party with those constituents.

The Harper government's 2008 Indian residential schools apology created goodwill, though it has faded of late due to problems turning over archived documents to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that is examining the legacy of the residential schools. But the Conservative Party has more aboriginal MPs than any other party in history (five) and last month they put Leona Aglukkaq, an Inuk woman, in charge of the all-important environment file.

Later this month, Harper will embark on his annual Arctic trip, which usually involves meeting with indigenous leaders.

That said, opposition parties say they hear frustration from aboriginal leaders about a perceived paternalistic approach by the Harper government. They say their leaders are listening to what First Nations communities want, and will develop plans based on what they hear.

Beardy says he thinks the two opposition parties are trying to sell their own platforms, but also trying to understand what's important to First Nations people. And thanks to social media and greater access to technology in remote communities, there's an increased awareness among young First Nations people about what the issues are, he said.

"I think a lot of our people, especially young people, are paying very close attention to what's being said."

Eric Grenier, a political analyst who runs the website threehundredeight.com, [has done analysis](#) showing as many as 14 ridings where the Conservative candidate could have lost if aboriginals had turned out in greater numbers and supported a Liberal or NDP candidate. That would have made the difference between a majority and minority Conservative government.

The on-reserve vote mostly favoured the NDP in 2011, Grenier said.

"(First Nations voters) tend not to support the Conservatives. So if (the opposition) could get more of those voters out they would certainly benefit," he said.

Jean-Pierre Kingsley, Elections Canada's chief electoral officer from 1990 to 2007, estimates there are 25 ridings in which aboriginal voters, if mobilized in favour of one candidate, could make the difference.

"The unsettled matter of aboriginals in Canada is percolating more and more amongst the general population and especially amongst the native populations of Canada," said Kingsley, now a senior fellow at the University of Ottawa's school of public and international affairs. "You just get the sense that finally we just might be starting to turn the corner. And elections would be a nice way to help accelerate that significantly."